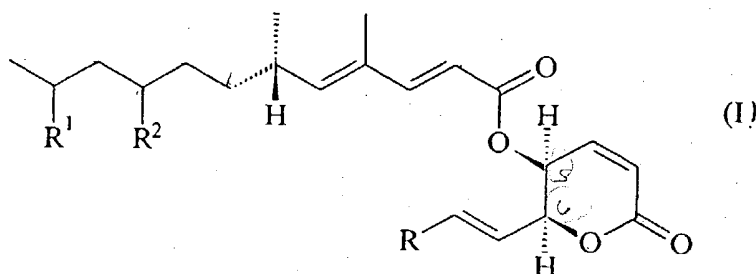


CLAIMS

1. A 5,6-dihydro- $\alpha$ -pyrone of formula (I)

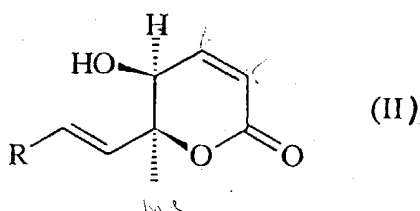


wherein R is CO<sub>2</sub>H or CH<sub>3</sub>, and each of R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> is H; or R is CO<sub>2</sub>H, one of R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> is H and the other is OH; or, when R is CO<sub>2</sub>H, a pharmaceutically or veterinarily acceptable salt thereof.

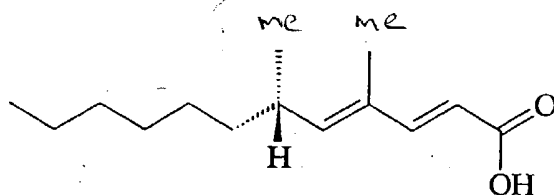
2. A process for the preparation of a 5,6-dihydro- $\alpha$ -pyrone of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a pharmaceutically or veterinarily acceptable salt thereof, which process comprises:

- (i) fermenting, in a source of carbon, nitrogen and inorganic salts, fungal strain *Phomopsis* sp. 22502 (CBS 313.96) or a mutant thereof which produces a said 5,6-dihydro- $\alpha$ -pyrone;
- (ii) isolating a said 5,6-dihydro- $\alpha$ -pyrone from the fermentation broth; and
- (iii) if desired when the isolated said 5,6-dihydro- $\alpha$ -pyrone is the compound of formula (I) wherein R is CO<sub>2</sub>H, converting the said 5,6-dihydro- $\alpha$ -pyrone into a pharmaceutically or veterinarily acceptable salt thereof.

3. A process for the preparation of a 5,6-dihydro- $\alpha$ -pyrone of formula (I), as defined in claim 1, wherein R is CH<sub>3</sub>, which process comprises esterifying the phomalactone of formula (II):

C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>10</sub>O<sub>5</sub>C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>12</sub>O<sub>5</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>

with a fatty acid of formula (IIIa):



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(IIIa)

C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>24</sub>O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>24</sub>O<sub>2</sub>

4. A pharmaceutical or veterinary composition comprising a pharmaceutically or veterinarily acceptable carrier or diluent and, as active ingredient, a compound as claimed in claim 1.

5. A compound according to claim 1 for use in a method of treatment of the human or animal body by therapy.

6. A compound according to claim 5 for use as a cytokine production inhibitor.

7. A compound according to claim 6 for use as an IL-1 production inhibitor.

8. A compound according to claim 6 for use in the